

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
Park and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, June 18, 2009
7:30 p.m.
Charles Houston Center
901 Wythe Street

Commissioners

Judy Guse-Noritake, Chair
Matthew Coda
William Cromley:
Clark (Stephen) Mercer
David Dexter
Kaj Vetter
Robert Moir

Staff

Richard Baier (Interim Director, RPCA)
William Chesley (RPCA)
Roger Blakeley (RPCA)
Jack Browand (RPCA)
Ron Kagawa (RPCA)
Mary Stephens (RPCA)

Commissioners – Excused Absences

Ripley Forbes
Henry Brooks

Note: Marshanika Rich – resigned

AGENDA

- I. Welcome
- II. Approval of Summary Minutes From the April and May 2009 Meeting
- III. CIVIC Awards- PRC Nominations Committee
- IV. Update on the Steering Committee for Healthy Alexandria – Ripley Forbes
- V. Update on City Waterfront Planning – Kagawa
- VI. Update on Potomac Yard and Braddock Park Fields at G.W. - Kagawa
- VII. Update on Four Mile Run Stream Restoration Project- Kagawa
- VIII. Update on PYAC and PYPAG- Kagawa
- IX. Recreation Programming Update - Chesley
- X. Update on Accreditation Visit and Next Steps – Browand
- XI. Director’s Report – Richard Baier, P.E., Interim Director
- XII. Reports From Commissioners
- XIII. Adjournment

I. Welcome

- Ripley Forbes, Henry Brooks and Richard Brune have excused absences.

II. Approval of Summary Minutes From the April 2009 and May 2009 Summary Meeting Minutes.

- Moir proposed and Mercer seconded approval of both passed by unanimous vote.

III. CIVIC Awards- PRC Nominations Committee

- 4 individual awards – Brian Donegan, Jeff Murphy, Maureen Dugan, Matthew Harwood, Susan Miranda; 2 group awards – Boy Scout Troop #129, Taylor Run Civic Association.

Kaj Vetter proposed and Bob Moir seconded approval of the proposed CIVIC Award nominations. The awards will be presented on July 11 at the City's Birthday Celebration.

IV. Update on the Steering Committee for Healthy Alexandria – Ripley Forbes
(Deferred until next month)

V. Update on City Waterfront Planning – Kagawa

Consultant in info gathering phase, talking to staff, etc. RPCA staff advocates long-range MP needs to be

- Design principles remain the same as those published at the start of the process.
- 23 June (Tuesday) – annual WF Walking Tour w/ Planning Comm. (Windmill Hill Park meet up @ 7:30 a.m.
- 24 June – a staff review of WF with the consultant.
- 27 June – WF Design Charette at TC Williams.

FOLLOW UP ACTION: Staff emphasized the importance of Commissioners' participating in design charrette. Chair: WF dog parks are a potentially complicated issue that needs to be addressed during the charrette with possible relocation and improvements as a part of the overall planning for the WF.

Resource Protection Area issue: The Chesapeake Bay requires protection for natural resources and water quality to extend 100 feet from the shoreline. This will result in any improvements in this RPA being limited but in general they will need to maintain or enhance ecological processes.

- Robinson Terminal North site will be the primary focus of any true development, but still in the context of RPA restrictions.

VII. Update on Four Mile Run Stream Restoration Project- Kagawa

- Design guidelines are 90 % complete and will be forwarded to the Planning Commission in September.

VIII. Update on PYDAC (Potomac Yard Design Advisory Commission) and PYPAG-Kagawa

Discussion:

- Regarding the continued use of the two athletic fields located in the main part of the project, RPCA staff believes that by adjusting the current field boundaries, and reducing some run-out area that they should be able to keep the current field sizes in use during and after the sewer line installation that needs to occur.
- The PYDAG group is working through different scenarios for the redevelopment of the "big box" site, including a location for a proposed Metro stop on the west side of the rail line. Some of the Metro locations being studied would impact aspects of the current open space/park design. PADAG is working toward concept approval by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2010.

VI. Update on Potomac Yard and Braddock Park Fields at G.W. – Kagawa
(NOTE: Item taken out of original order)

LAND BAY L – BRADDOCK FIELDS

- City Council approved a threshold study on this potential land exchange as part of Planning and Zoning's 2010 work plan; a preliminary study to be presented to City Council this Fall.
- City Council will move ahead incrementally to decide whether to make some sort of land swap, with the ACPS involved in the decision.
- Program with American Horticultural Association, to be hosted at Green Garage conference – 27 June – w/ Master Gardeners, to be held at Lee Center. “Bringing sustainability to every homeowner”... goal.

Hand-Out: “Metro Station Location Alternatives”

Follow-up Action: Director recommended PRC submit a Metro site recommendation to either CC or Planning Commission if there is a preference.

Discussion highlights:

- Metro site will directly impact open space. Indirectly a Metro stop will likely create pressure for additional development.
- Monthly updates on the athletic field land swap to be added to PRC agenda.
- Commissioners emphasized the importance of open space and parks interests being represented within the decision-making process up-front. July PRC meeting to receive Potomac Yards development status update.

IX. Recreation Programming Update - Chesley

Last meeting reviewed RPCA's FY-10 budget reductions for Recreation Services. The new fee for the out-of-school program was discussed last night at a meeting with the Charles Houston Advisory Council attended by Council Members Rob Krupicka and Del Pepper. The Charles Houston Advisory Board recognized need for RPCA to charge fees in order to maintain programs. RPCA has met with a number of Recreation Center Advisory Boards and this will continue in the coming weeks.

NEW PROGRAMS: Charles Houston – early a.m. program (fee-based program), will include classes (aerobics, jazzercise, etc.) plus fitness center use. The centers will offer “before-care” service this summer. A \$40/week (\$8/day) fee is required for this service, requiring at least 10 children per day to make it cost-neutral.

NEW SPORT PROGRAMMING –

Field hockey - A clinic thru RPCA for elementary school children;
Basketball for 5-6 year olds (modified courts).

Adult sports – Kickball; dodge ball women's basketball have all been added in. RPCA market'g new activities... classes.

SPECIAL EVENTS POLICY –Rich Baier stated that the goal of staff is to have a draft special events policy finished by July 15. The City Council meeting where the matter was discussed recently is viewable on the City's Webcast. RPCA's FY-10 budget was reduced for Special Events. City Council supports RPCA's actions to craft a revenue-neutral Special Events Policy, noting that opportunities for sponsorship of city events were being considered. It is anticipated that City Council will take up the policy at a meeting in September.

Ad Hoc Recreation Committee Report (the April 22 memo)

The Chair stated that the Commission will discuss the report once the new director is on board. William Chesley said that much of what is in the report is already being implemented by RPCA.

Additional Note: The City is co-hosting a program with American Horticultural Society at the "Green Garage Conference", occurring 27 June at the Lee Center. "Bringing sustainability to every homeowner" is the conference goal.

X. Update on Accreditation Visit and Next Steps – Browand

Rich:

Quality of the team was excellent. The visitation team consisted of Barbara Manzo, Ft. Myers, FL (Chair); Bethany Timmes, Columbia SC; Robert Armistead, Austin TX; and Jimmy O'Conner, NRPA. They were impressed by the City's diversity, quantity of RPCA programs, and visited several parks and play areas such as Hunter Mill Park. The Department met all Required Standards, and met 151 of the 155 overall standards. The four unmet standards were related to areas in marketing, program and risk management. The Visitation team will recommend the Department be reaccredited. The official reaccreditation will occur in October during NRPA's Annual Conference. The Department's reaccreditation was led by Jack Browand, with assistance from Beth Carton, Mary Stephenson and other staff. Rich received an email from Ms. Manzo indicating this was "the best review she'd been on; the best Department she'd reviewed with people all happy and working well as a team." The Commission commended Mr. Baier for his work as Interim Director supporting the staff throughout its preparations for the accreditation review.

CHAIR: Commended Rich for his work

As Rich prepares to return to full-time T&ES, he and the RCPA management team are committed to exploring how the staff of the two departments might better develop working relationships and programs. Chair suggested that the City Manager may want to look at a program for key staff to have a limited-time rotation to other Departments, "fellowships", to cultivate work relationships. William noted that ACPS and RPCA

staff members meet monthly to discuss related issues and communication. This has resulted in better execution of work and better communication.

XI. Director's Report – Richard Baier, P.E., Interim Director

- **Update on New Director Hiring Process** – Well over 100 apps, 3 finalists met with employee and stakeholder groups. Employees generated questions for City Manager to pose to the candidates and provided post-interview feedback to City Manager.
- **Update on Freedmen Cemetery Project – Mary Stephens** – Work has continued to carry out the vision that came from the design completion completed last year. This Commission will host a presentation and public hearing on the preliminary design for this project in July.
- Design for the sculptural focal element will go through the City's public art process.
- **Marina Pricing (Roger)** – RPCA is redoing its marina business plan, and reviewing fee schedules at other local marinas as a comparison. The idea of offering reduced rate rentals for a small set of unreserved slips is likely to be tested. A proposed rate increase scheduled to go into effect in July is likely to be pushed back to September. The installation of security cameras around the City Marina has been approved and cameras will be installed within the next 60-90 days.
- **Update on Small Pools: Virginia Graham Baker retrofit** - the small pools are being retrofitted with new safety drainage systems. **Lee pool and Colosanto pool will not open this summer due to budget cuts.** Two large pools (Warwick and Old Town pools opened Memorial Day and will be open 7-days a week beginning on June 29.
- **Fort Ward Park Update** - City Council established an Ad Hoc Group at a recent meeting and three PRC members will be appointed to the Group. The group will develop a plan for the interim management of the park, balancing the history and cultural resources, recreational and picnic uses, environmental concerns, and maintenance needs, etc. Additional information will be provided at the July of meeting and PRC will designate three members to participate.
- **Urban Forestry Master Plan** – The Master Plan was reviewed and approved by City Council with few amendments and is available on-line. The Plan will be implemented as funding becomes available.
- **1 and 7 Delray Pocket Park** – The design for this park is moving into construction documents and will be constructed as funding becomes available.
- **Athletic Field Improvements** - Blakeley reviewed the status of funds available for 2009 through 2015, reflecting City Council's final changes to the proposed budget and trade-offs between the priorities of the fields the department has scheduled for improvement. Ben Brenman Field – RPCA is currently discussing how to proceed

with the Brenman Field, with the process likely to take at least 18 months for desing and construction.

- Director: RPCA needs to outline for commission how the \$900,000 will be spent and public process for deciding how to proceed; recommended that a documentable process for public outreach be proposed and discussed with commission at July meeting – for a variety of fields, not just options for Brenman.

CODA – Recommended creating a matrix of the variety of fields and options, rather than reviewing individual field options one by one; MOIR - Noted the interest in a full-size rectangular, lit field with available parking, few of which are represented on the Board.

Follow up: Memo to be sent prior to July meeting to discuss a possible process.

HOLMES RUN MULTI-USE TRAIL – Blakeley presented a diagram of the planned phases for construction.

Update on Arts – The Arts Commission is developing a City-wide arts policy; Director noted that parks and open space are often viewed as potential art locations. Staff believes a draft policy will be ready for Commission review in September.

XII. Reports From Commissioners

CODA – No report.

MOIR – Spring season's over; summer programs have started.

DEXTER: No report.

MERCER – Chinquapin Park – Need for improved communication and cooperation w/ neighbors and Park staff.

- Met with John Porter regarding a teacher's desire to use garden plots for T.C Williams HS students. Met with Friends of Chinquapin group and will be sharing their interests, concerns and maintenance activities. They have volunteered to assist with taking care of the park. Mercer wishes to arrange a meeting with Friends and with RPCA staff, Friends of Chinquapin, Schools, etc., to discuss how they can work together on Chinquapin park maintenance issues. Idea presented which would give priority to teachers for use in educational purposes.
- Upcoming Events reminder
 - June 25 – Waterfront Tour – Windmill Hill Park meet up; June 20-21: Waterfront Festival; June 27 - TC Williams. Waterfront planning; July 11 – USA/City's Birthday Celebration.

Next Meeting – 7 P.M. – Freedmen's Cemetery Public Hearing and Regular Meeting. Location: Lee Center.

XIII. Adjournment - 9:50 PM